

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application:

1-93. (Canceled)

94. (New) A method comprising:

receiving, at a storage server, requests for a plurality of files stored at the storage server, from at least one client of the storage server;

causing, by the storage server, each of a plurality of cluster devices that are external to the storage server to execute an operation on the plurality of files simultaneously;

at the storage server, receiving results of the plurality of cluster devices' operations on the plurality of files; and

responding to the requests according to said results.

95. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein said operation comprises a virus scan operation, a compression operation, or an encryption operation.

96. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein causing, by the storage server, each of a plurality of cluster devices that are external to the storage server to execute an operation on the plurality of files simultaneously includes sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files from the storage server to the plurality of cluster devices.

97. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using non-uniform memory access.

98. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using a communications network.

99. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein said sending is accomplished by using a direct connection.

100. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein responding to the requests according to said results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if said results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

101. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any viruses.

102. (New) The method of claim 94, wherein the plurality of cluster devices is a cluster of interconnected personal computers.

103. (New) An apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a mass storage facility, the mass storage facility storing a plurality of files;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory storing instructions which when executed by the processor, cause the processing system to perform a process, the process comprising:

receiving requests for the plurality of files;

requesting a plurality of cluster devices external to the apparatus to scan the plurality of files simultaneously for viruses, said requesting including sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices; and

receiving results from the plurality of cluster devices regarding the scanning; and

responding to the requests according to the results.

104. (New) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using non-uniform memory access.

105. (New) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a communications network.

106. (New) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a direct connection.

107. (New) The apparatus of claim 103, wherein responding to the requests according to the results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if the results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

108. (New) The apparatus of claim 107, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any virus.

109. (New) A machine-readable medium having sequences of instructions stored therein which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform a process comprising:

receiving requests for a plurality of files stored at a storage server;

requesting a plurality of cluster devices to scan the plurality of files simultaneously for viruses, said requesting including sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices; and

receiving results from the plurality of cluster devices regarding the scanning; and

responding to the requests according to the results.

110. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using non-uniform memory access.

111. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a communications network.

112. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein sending an identifier and path of each of the plurality of files to the plurality of cluster devices is accomplished by using a direct connection.

113. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein responding to the requests according to the results comprises:

for each of the plurality of files, sending the corresponding file to a client requesting the corresponding file if the results indicate that the corresponding file is safe to send.

114. (New) The machine-readable medium of claim 109, wherein a file is considered to be safe if the file is not infected with any virus.